

## ***Hebden Bridge Community Association***



Media release

Issued Thursday 31 March

### **EUROPEAN GRANT BOOSTS COMMUNITY-RUN TOWN HALL**

Over a million pounds of European funding is coming to Hebden Bridge. Hebden Bridge Community Association trustees signed the legal paperwork earlier this week (March 28<sup>th</sup>) for a capital grant of £1,224,808 from the European Regional Development Fund. An additional revenue grant of about £34,000 is part of the package.

News of the grant is a wonderful first birthday present for the Association, which took over ownership and management of Hebden Bridge Town Hall from Calderdale council on April 1<sup>st</sup> last year. Hebden Bridge is one of the first communities in Britain to be responsible for its own Town Hall through this sort of 'asset transfer' agreement.

The ERDF grant for enterprise units and business facilities means that the Association has now raised in excess of £3.2m for the Town Hall site. Grant and loan funding of a little over £2m was agreed with the Communitybuilders fund at the end of last year. Together, the total funding package allows the creation of purpose-built community and enterprise facilities for the town, as well as work to restore the existing Town Hall building.

"We're extremely pleased to have been able to negotiate this investment in our town's future," says Peter Hirst, chair of the Association. "A great deal of hard work has been necessary, but at last we've got there."

Following the award of planning consent for the development last Autumn, the Association has been developing detailed design work and undertaking the tendering process for the building contractor. It hopes to announce the name of the chosen company very shortly. Building work is scheduled to begin on site in mid-April.

The volunteer-led Association's success in attracting this European funding is a major achievement and demonstrates the benefits which can follow from carefully-planned asset transfer arrangements. Peter Hirst warns however that asset transfer of public buildings is not something to undertake lightly. "We'd probably rather that our public buildings remained in the stewardship of our council, but if asset transfer is necessary to save them that's what we'll have to do," he says.

Since taking over Hebden Bridge Town Hall last year, the Association has enabled considerably more usage to be made of the landmark Victorian listed building, including making it licensed for weddings and civil partnerships.

The Association is run by a group of trustees elected by its 550-strong membership, made up of local individuals and organisations. Members and Friends of the project are invited to a special briefing session on the building work timetable at the Town Hall on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April at 11am.

The European funding has been awarded as part of Europe's support for the region's economic development through the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme 2007-13. Malcolm Taylor, who manages that programme said: "The European Union provides investment support to help regions improve their economies and help local businesses, people and communities to improve their prospects. I'm sure that this investment, like the others we are making with ERDF in this region, will make a positive impact encouraging local enterprise in Hebden Bridge in the years to come".

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Note to editors

1. Full details of the asset transfer and of Hebden Bridge Community Association can be accessed at [www.hebdenbridgetownhall.org.uk](http://www.hebdenbridgetownhall.org.uk).

More information: Andrew Bibby, 01422 845799

## **2. Yorkshire and The Humber ERDF Programme 2007-2013**

The European Regional Development Fund Programme is managed by Yorkshire Forward on behalf of a regional partnership including the National Government, European Commission and local bodies. The programme has €583 million from the European Regional Development Fund to invest by 2013.

Further information about the ERDF Programme in Yorkshire and The Humber, including information about the projects that are receiving ERDF Investment, is available at [www.yorkshire-forward.com/erdf](http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/erdf)

### **European Regional Development Fund**

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was set up in 1975 to stimulate economic development in less prosperous regions of the European Union.

ERDF is provided to support the European Union's cohesion policy that seeks to redress imbalances in development between regions and Member States. It is used to support projects that can help local economies address the challenges of globalisation and contribute to delivering Europe's 2020 strategy of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Information about the European Union's support for regions is available at [www.ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm)



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